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SIPDIS

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FOR NASA/FELDSTEIN

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SUBJECT: ITALIAN RESPONSE OF GOVERNMENT-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS
ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION PROGRAM

REF: STATE 104344

¶1. MISSION DISCUSSED REFTEL TALKING POINTS WITH COUNSELOR GUICCIARDI OF THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION. ALTHOUGH GUICCIARDI DEMONSTRATED A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE EUROPEAN PARTNER'S REQUEST FOR A GOVERNMENT-LEVEL MEETING IN THE UNITED STATES ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISS), HE CLAIMED THAT THE ISSUE IS BEING HANDLED ENTIRELY BY THE ITALIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. THEREFORE, ALL INQUIRIES REGARDING THE TIMING OF SUCH A MEETING SHOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE ITALIAN EMBASSY OR TO THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES, WHO IS ACTING AS THE COORDINATOR FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARTNER GROUP. AS A COURTESY, ESTOFFS ALSO BRIEFED PROFESSOR SERGIO VETRELLA, PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN SPACE AGENCY (ASI) DURING A MEETING ON JUNE 6, 2002. VETRELLA DECLARED HIS BELIEF THAT THE PROPOSED MEETING WOULD BE A "WASTE OF TIME" SINCE HE PERCEIVES THAT THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN THE UNITED STATES WOULD PREVENT ANY REAL MOVEMENT ON THE ISSUE OF ISS FINANCING.

SEMBLER

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